

The Painter House  
West Haven, Connecticut

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District Of Connecticut

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Harold H. Davis, District Officer  
29 Whitney Ave., New Haven, Conn.

PAINTER HOUSE

West Haven, New Haven County, Conn.

Owner: Mrs. John K. Stevenson, 255 Main St., West Haven

Date of Erection: 1695

Architect or Builder: Captain Samuel Smith

Present Condition: Good

Number of Stories: Two and One-half

Materials of Construction: Stone foundation  
Brick chimney  
Shingled roof  
Clapboard sidewalls

Other Existing Records: "Early Connecticut Houses"- Isham,  
Scrapbook on West Haven compiled  
by Mrs. Lewis.

List of Photographs:

1. Front Elevation
2. Detail of Stairs
3. Cupboard in Living Room
4. Panel Detail - East Wall of Living Room
5. Fireplace in Old Kitchen

PAINTER HOUSE  
WEST HAVEN, CONN.

West Haven, not unlike the other old towns of the Colony, has its central green. East of this rectangle, on the north side of Main Street, stands the beautiful old house known as the Painter or the Thomas Painter House.

Although the chimney bears the date of 1695, it is known that this structure was built in 1684 or 1685 by Peter Mallory. In 1700 it was sold to Captain Samuel Smith by the wife of Peter Mallory. Thomas Painter was born in this house in 1760, a direct descendant of Captain Samuel Smith, being his great grandson. The present owner, Mrs. John K. Severson, is also in a line, descended from these early settlers, and she graciously gives information concerning this homestead with pride, which she should rightfully have.

The house, which is in excellent condition, has a lean-to built as part of the original fabric, otherwise it is the regular central chimney type, with no overhang.

The entrance porch is very wide, a trait characteristic of the New Haven dwellings, which possess nearly two feet more of width in their porches than in general do the houses of the Connecticut people. The staircase, which may or may not be original, is a very fine one with molded string and rail, and with turned balusters which are of double curve and thus of the same profile above and below the center. A half baluster is placed against the square post. All this woodwork is of oak. The collar is under the master room only, and is reached at present by stairs leading from the kitchen. It is white-washed, but the original mortar was of shell lime.

The hall has a cased summer post and girts and some fine panelling at the fireplace end. It also contains a very good buffet or corner china cupboard. The parlor is very much like the hall but is a much shorter room.

There is definite proof that the lean-to is original, by examining the framing of the wall between the lean-to chamber and those of the main house. Here the studs are still in place, but the clapboards and even the nail marks which would betray the former presence of them are wanting. Also the fact that the pins of the joints in the northwest post had never been cut off close to the wood, proves that the lean-to could not have been an addition.

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The chimney, up to a joint just below the roof, is of stone laid in clay - above it is of brick. The roof is original and is of a kind very much in fashion in the Colony.

Even now this house, which is probably the oldest in West Haven, in its environs among the more modern structures of Main Street, still stands out as being the most impressive.

Source of Information: Early Connecticut Houses - Isham  
Scrapbook on West Haven compiled  
by Mrs. Lewis.  
(West Haven Town Library)

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